

**Saint Paul Planning Commission  
City Hall Conference Center  
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

**Minutes March 9, 2007**

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, March 9, 2007, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners Present:** Mmes. Faricy, Lu, McCall, Morton, Porter and Smitten; and Messrs. Alton, Bellus, Commers, Cudahy, Goodlow, Johnson, Kong, Kramer, Nelson and Rosemark.

**Commissioners Absent:** Mmes. \*Donnelly-Cohen and \*Trevino; and Messrs. \*Dandrea, \*Gordon, and \*Mejia.

\*Excused

**Also Present:** Larry Soderholm, Planning Administrator; Anne Hunt, Mayor's Office; Patricia James, Merritt Clapp-Smith, Shawntera Hardy, Luis Pereira, Andrew Jacobson, Sonja Butler, and Kate Fleming, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

**I. Approval of minutes February 23, 2007.**

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Nelson moved approval of the minutes of February 23, 2007. Commissioner Commers seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

**II. Chair's Announcements**

Chair Alton announced that the Mayor submitted his new Planning Commission appointments to the City Council this week and they are on the Council's agenda for confirmation next week. The new Commission appointees are Michael Margulies, Eduardo Barrera, Bob Spaulding, and Barb Wencil. The following Commissioners have been reappointed for three more years to 2010: Erick Goodlow, Stephen Gordon, George Johnson, Yung-Kang Lu, and Gladys Morton. He congratulated the appointees and expressed his thanks to the members who are completing their service on the Commission.

**III. Planning Administrator's Announcements**

Larry Soderholm reported on planning-related business at the City Council for last week and their agenda for next week. He noted the Council's item accepting funds from the University of California at Berkeley for Donna Drummond to present Saint Paul's work on the Central Corridor at a forum on transit-oriented development. The forum started today and Ms. Drummond is there.

**IV. PUBLIC HEARING: Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan Summary**  
Item from the Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee.

(Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651/266-6547)

Commissioner McCall introduced the agenda item and Merritt Clapp-Smith gave the staff report, including an update on the consolidation of the three community councils in District 13. Merriam Park and Lexington Hamline both have current, approved plans; whereas Snelling Hamline's plan over twenty years old.

Chair Alton read the rules of procedures for the public hearing and announced that notice of the public hearing was published in the Saint Paul Legal Ledger on February 15, 2007.

The following people spoke:

1. Lindsay Schwab, 1532 Hague Avenue, Saint Paul, MN, 55104, Chair of the Snelling Hamline Community Plan Task Force. Ms. Schwab described how the full plan was developed and explained the priorities of the community listed on page 8 of the Plan Summary.
2. Dave Monson, 1527 Selby Avenue, Saint Paul, MN, 55104. Mr. Monson, who is a Snelling Hamline resident, said that in November 2006, the Snelling Hamline Community Council hosted a meeting to hear the community's current feelings about the future of Ayd Mill Road. At the conclusion of the meeting, a "community advisory vote" indicated that 20 people supported plans to extend the current roadway north to I-94, and 6 people supported plans to turn Ayd Mill into a linear park. Monson expressed his concern that the Plan Summary does not adequately reflect the most recent community sentiment about Ayd Mill Road.
3. Erik Holland, 1384 Portland Avenue, Saint Paul, MN, 55104, recent past President of the Snelling Hamline Community Council and member of the Community Plan Task Force. Mr. Holland elaborated further on how the plan was prepared. Holland addressed the Ayd Mill Road issue, indicating that the preference for a linear park in the Ayd Mill corridor is still the official position of the Snelling Hamline Community Council. Since the November meeting Mr. Monson referred to, the Council has been preoccupied with reorganization to comply with the City Council resolution, which was passed in early December 2006, to dissolve the Snelling Hamline Community Council and merge it with the Merriam Park and Lexington-Hamline Councils into a single District 13. The Snelling Hamline Community Council has not voted to change its position on Ayd Mill, although there may be more openness now to consider options for making permanent road connections.

Discussion followed.

**MOTION:** *Commissioner McCall moved to close the public hearing and refer the matter back to the Committee. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.* Commissioner McCall said the Committee will discuss this matter on March 14, 2007.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Thomas-Dale/District 7 Plan Summary  
Item from the Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee.  
(Shawntera Hardy, 651/266-6562)

Commissioner McCall introduced the agenda item.

Shawntera Hardy gave a staff report on the preparation of the Thomas-Dale Neighborhood Plan

Summary, its vision and key issues. One of the key issues is how land use and zoning should change in anticipation of LRT and the *Central Corridor Development Strategy*. The Thomas Dale Plan recommends rezoning Sherburne to RT2 to allow townhouses and fourplexes. The District 7 Planning Council has agreed to hold off on zoning recommendations and a 40-acre study until completion of the development strategy. A large share of the land proposed for rezoning in the Thomas-Dale Plan is within the Central Corridor study area.

Commissioner Kramer said he has concerns about rezoning Sherburne Avenue to RT2 without having a plan for what would actually be built there. Some of the blocks on Sherburne have stable single family homes. If they are rezoned, some homes will be chopped up into duplexes and triplexes, and some might become problem properties.

Ms. Hardy commented that the land use pattern depicted in the plan shows where District 7 wants to go in the future, and they have agreed to hold off on actual zoning changes until the Central Corridor process has recommendations about what the steps should be to achieve the future vision. In addition, the Invest Saint Paul Initiative is taking a closer look at Thomas-Dale in terms of what's there. A number of properties are vacant or in poor condition. Invest Saint Paul is about to tackle any sections of Thomas-Dale where housing disinvestment is concentrated.

Chair Alton read the rules of procedures for the public hearing and announced that notice of the public hearing was published in the Saint Paul Legal Ledger on February 15, 2007

The following people spoke:

1. Boa Lee, 689 North Dale Street, Saint Paul, MN, 55103, community organizer for the Thomas-Dale/District 7 Planning Council. Ms. Lee said the district council conducted a series of focus groups on the district plan. The focus groups were supportive of the recommendations that have been put into the plan. Because of the demographics in District 7, a lot of the plan's recommendations relate to facilities and services for kids, low-income families, and the elderly. There is an emphasis on public transportation and affordable housing within a mixed income neighborhood. Residents want facilities and services that contribute to a healthy community. District 7's goal is to attract neighbors to buy and live in the neighborhood.
2. Gail Mollner 158 Charles Avenue, Saint Paul, MN, 55103. Ms. Mollner said she has read the City's Comprehensive Plan and she wanted to comment on some of the City's policies. For one thing, she is concerned that LRT policies put too much emphasis on work trips, getting from your home to your job. She hopes that people will stop and shop along University Ave. This potential of LRT for neighborhood business is emphasized in the Thomas-Dale Plan. She also supported the need for neighborhood design guidelines, which some other Saint Paul neighborhoods have, but Thomas-Dale lacks. She would support guidelines that hold businesses responsible to how they operate in the neighborhood, and the same goes for landlords and residents. Community members should have a voice in what goes on and need to make decisions along with the City.

**MOTION:** *Commissioner McCall moved to close the public hearing and refer the matter back to the Committee. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.* Commissioner McCall said the Committee will also discuss this matter on March 14, 2007.

**V. Zoning Committee**

## NEW BUSINESS

*Commissioner Morton announced the Zoning Committee meeting on March 1, 2007, was been canceled due to a snowstorm. The following two items for that agenda were laid over to the March 15, 2007, meeting.*

# 07-020-939 Highgrove Community Credit Union – Conditional Use Permit for drive through service for credit union, and variance of floor area ratio (.5 FAR required; .27 FAR proposed). 1804 7<sup>th</sup> St W, SE corner at Montreal. (Patricia James, 651/266-6639)

Amendment to Zoning Code regarding conditional use permit expiration – Proposed amendment to Chapter 61.500 of the Zoning Code clarifying those circumstances when a conditional use permit expires. (Patricia James, 651/266-6639)

Commissioner Morton read the additional agenda items for the meeting on March 15, 2007.

Larry Soderholm added that City staff has discussed the site plan for the proposed Home Depot in the Midway area. Staff will refer the site plan to the Zoning Committee for a public hearing on March 29, 2007.

### **V. Comprehensive Planning Committee**

Larry Soderholm announced the next meeting will be on March 20, 2007.

### **VI. Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee**

Chair McCall announced the next meeting will be on March 14, 2007.

### **VII. Communications Commission**

None

### **VIII. Task Force Reports**

University Avenue Central Corridor Task Force. Shawntera Hardy gave a PowerPoint presentation on the draft *Central Corridor Development Strategy* that both Central Corridor Task Forces are working on. The report covered the project timeline, what the Metro Council is doing in regards to public participation, the goals of the development strategy, and images of the types of redevelopment that should occur so that land use and public transit will be complementary.

Ford Site Plan Task Force. Commissioner Faricy announced the new meeting place is Lumen Christi Catholic Church located at 2055 Boland Avenue and the next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2007.

Transportation Comprehensive Plan Task Force. Commissioner Commers announced the next meeting will be on March 22, 2007.

Como Avenue Small Area Plan Task Force. Commissioner Commers announced their first public meeting will be on March 21, 2007, at St. Anthony Park Elementary School on Como Avenue.

Downtown/Capitol Central Corridor Task Force. Commissioner Smitten announced that Metro Council recommended denial of the loop alignment so it will not be included in preliminary engineering. However, they decided to include two alternatives for bringing the LRT down to the Union Depot platforms in addition to the alignment that terminates on Fourth Street in front of the depot. Also, the Downtown/Capitol Central Corridor Task Force is having its last meeting on March 13, 2007, and will complete its recommendations for the *Central Corridor Development Strategy*.

**IX. Old Business**

None

**X New Business**

Commissioner Commers announced the Property Tax Working Group for the University Avenue Central Corridor Task Force has completed its report. The report has some interesting and unexpected findings about how the property tax burden has been changing in the city. The assessed values along University Avenue have been rising, but not at a faster rate than other neighborhood commercial areas. He will email the links for the report to Commission members.

**XI. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Recorded by Kate Fleming  
and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary  
Planning and Economic Development Department,  
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Larry Soderholm, AICP  
Planning Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marilyn Porter  
Secretary of the Planning Commission

PED\Fleming\March 9, 2007